

**What is Claimed:**

- 1                   1.     An absorbent article comprising:  
2                   a barrier layer;  
3                   a cover layer extending substantially parallel to said barrier layer; and  
4                   a superabsorbent polymer interposed between said cover layer and said  
5 barrier layer, said superabsorbent polymer being adhered to said article in a pattern  
6 configured to distribute fluid in said absorbent article, wherein at least one portion of  
7 said absorbent article extending essentially completely across said absorbent article is  
8 substantially devoid of said superabsorbent polymer.
- 1                   2.     The absorbent article of claim 1 further comprising a core  
2 interposed between said cover layer and said barrier layer, wherein said  
3 superabsorbent polymer is applied to said core or said barrier layer in said pattern.
- 1                   3.     The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said pattern is configured  
2 to increase resistance of said absorbent article to tearing, said at least one portion of  
3 said absorbent article extending essentially completely across said absorbent article  
4 being more resistant to tearing than at least one other portion of said absorbent article.
- 1                   4.     The absorbent article of claim 1 further comprising a core  
2 interposed between said cover layer and said barrier layer, wherein said core comprises  
3 at least one of cellulose and cellulose acetate.
- 1                   5.     The absorbent article of claim 4 wherein said core is selected from  
2 the group consisting of tissue, air laid composite, and paper towel sheet.
- 1                   6.     The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said barrier layer  
2 comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene,  
3 copolymers of polyethylene and polypropylene, polyester, and bi-component fibers.
- 1                   7.     The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said cover layer  
2 comprises one or both of a non-woven material and an apertured film.
- 1                   8.     The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said pattern forms at  
2 least one region including said superabsorbent polymer and at least one continuous  
3 zone that is substantially devoid of said superabsorbent polymer, said continuous zone  
4 having greater tear resistance than said region including said superabsorbent polymer.
- 1                   9.     The absorbent article of claim 8 wherein said pattern is selected  
2 from the group consisting of a spiral pattern, a melt blown pattern, a multi-tracked  
3 pattern, a full coat pattern, a zoned spray pattern, and an intermittent pattern.

10. The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein said superabsorbent polymer is formed from one or more of a polymer in liquid form and a polymer formed by conversion of a superabsorbent precursor, said superabsorbent precursor comprising one or both of a monomer and an oligomer.

**11. A method of making an absorbent article comprising the steps of:**

a) positioning a superabsorbent polymer adjacent a barrier layer in a pattern to form at least one region including the superabsorbent polymer and at least one region substantially devoid of said superabsorbent polymer extending essentially completely across the barrier layer, thereby providing the region substantially devoid of superabsorbent polymer with greater tear resistance than the region including the superabsorbent polymer; and

b) attaching a cover layer substantially parallel to and substantially coextensive with said barrier layer, thereby interposing said superabsorbent polymer between the barrier layer and the cover layer.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of interposing a core between the barrier layer and the cover layer, wherein said positioning step comprises applying the superabsorbent polymer to the core.

**13. A method of making an absorbent article comprising the steps of:**

a) positioning a liquid comprising a superabsorbent precursor adjacent a barrier layer in a pattern to form at least one region including the superabsorbent precursor and at least one region substantially devoid of the superabsorbent precursor extending essentially completely across the barrier layer, thereby providing the region substantially devoid of superabsorbent polymer with greater tear resistance than the region including the superabsorbent polymer;

b) converting the superabsorbent precursor to a superabsorbent polymer, thereby forming at least one region including the superabsorbent polymer and at least one region devoid of the superabsorbent polymer; and

c) coupling a cover layer to the barrier layer, thereby interposing the superabsorbent polymer between the barrier layer and the cover layer.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of interposing a core between the barrier layer and the cover layer, wherein said positioning step comprises applying the liquid to the core.

**15. An absorbent article comprising:**

- 13 -

2 a barrier layer;  
3 a cover layer extending substantially parallel to said barrier layer;  
4 an absorbent layer interposed between said cover layer and said barrier  
5 layer; and  
6 a superabsorbent polymer applied in liquid form to said absorbent layer,  
7 said superabsorbent polymer being applied in a pattern configured to distribute fluid in  
8 said absorbent article, wherein portions of said absorbent layer are at least partially  
9 coated with said superabsorbent polymer and other portions of said absorbent layer are  
10 substantially free of said superabsorbent polymer.

1 16. An absorbent underpad comprising:

2 a barrier layer;  
3 a cover layer extending substantially parallel to said barrier layer;  
4 a tissue layer interposed between said cover layer and said barrier layer;  
5 and  
6 a superabsorbent polymer applied in liquid form to said absorbent layer,  
7 said superabsorbent polymer being applied in a pattern configured to distribute fluid in  
8 said absorbent article, wherein portions of said absorbent layer are at least partially  
9 coated with said superabsorbent polymer and other portions of said absorbent layer are  
10 substantially free of said superabsorbent polymer.